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go!

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CU regents deny insurance to employees' gay partners

Wednesday's vote emphasizes morals, values, not benefit cost

By **Scott Thomsen**/The Gazette

ESTES PARK — Gay employees of the University of Colorado system will not be able to add their "domestic partners" to health-care policies provided by the university.

After informally supporting the idea months ago, the CU Board of Regents on Wednesday formally rejected a proposal to provide such benefits by a 7-1 vote. It was a vote that had more to do with individual morals, values and religious beliefs than the relatively low cost of expanding employee benefits.

"There is no doubt in my mind Colorado citizens are opposed to the measure before us," said Regent Jim Martin of Boulder.

"To change the nature of what is a nuclear family, that's a marriage issue, not a benefits issue," Martin said. "This measure is focused at a very narrow class of individual."

Martin voted against the policy change along with regents Jerry Rutledge of Colorado Springs, Henry Anton Jr. of Pueblo, Maureen Johnson of Boulder, Guy Kelley of Fort Collins, Norwood Robb of Littleton and Peter Steinhauer of Boulder. Regent Susan Kirk of Denver was the only member of the board to support the measure. Board President Bob Sievers, who supported the proposal, is allowed to vote only to break ties.

Under the proposal, which was sponsored by the CU Faculty Council and supported by the Staff Council and Student Forum, gay employees would have been able to sign an "affidavit of domestic partnership," then add their same-sex partners and any of their partners' children to their university health insurance plans.

As it stands, unmarried heterosexual partners of university employees likewise are not covered by university health plans.

But while heterosexual couples can marry and take advantage of university health benefits, homosexual couples can not, Faculty

See **REGENTS**/NEWS5

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Police were called into the case Monday because the men's mother, Betty Helen Stanko, allegedly told doctors Ross had sustained the throat injury when he fell in the garage.

"Ms. Stanko stated they had not called the police because they didn't want to get us involved," the affidavit says.

But Monday she called sheriff's deputies and claimed McCourt "pushed her in the chest, knocking her against the door" on Sunday, the affidavit states.

The affidavit also says that during an interview with investigators, McCourt admitted stabbing his brother and pushing his mother.

McCourt is scheduled to appear in El Paso County Court Friday.

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Judge orders counseling for pedophile

By **Dennis Huspeni**
The Gazette

An admitted pedophile who volunteered at a Springs church was sentenced Wednesday to six years at ComCor, ordered to undergo counseling and forbidden from coming into contact with children.

Brett Lee Rowland, 32, pleaded guilty in April to two felony counts of sexual assault on a child by a person in a position of trust. He faced up to 32 years in prison on each count.

A sentence at ComCor means Rowland will have to live at the community corrections facility, get a job, and comply with all court-ordered counseling.

Rowland admitted he fondled two boys while baby sitting for them; one was 11 and the other 12.

He met and befriended the boys' parents while volunteering at Woodmen Valley Chapel. No abuse ever occurred at the church.

A mother of one of the victims said Wednesday she wanted Rowland to have some prison time but felt it was most impor-

Regents

From NEWS1

Council President Mike Martin said in supporting the proposal.

"It's the right thing to do," Martin said. "We must provide equal treatment to all our employees."

He said the proposal was not designed to sanction the marriage of gay couples; it was intended to recognize changing family situations.

"We are not asking you to endorse a gay or lesbian lifestyle, merely acknowledge changes in American society," he told the board. "America is changing. All of us have friends and family members living in unique situations we never would have imagined growing up."

According to CU estimates, 58 to 116 employees were expected to enroll same-sex partners or same-sex partners with children in university health-care plans. That would have cost $53,000 to $107,000 per year. Additionally, the university would have had to spend about $50,000 to update its payroll system to accommodate the changes.

More than 50 colleges, including public universities in at least 12 states, and more than 600 private companies such as Coors, The Walt Disney Co. and Apple Computers offer medical insurance to the same-sex domestic partners of their employees. At the University of Colorado at Boulder, the same-sex partners of students can get health care at the student-funded Student Health Center and same-sex partners of students and employees can get memberships at the student-run recreation center.

When the insurance changes were first proposed last year, a majority of the regents supported the plan, Sievers said. But hundreds of people have called or written the board to oppose the expansion of benefits, he said.

Additionally, several state legislators had threatened to mount a drive to cut university funding if the measure passed.

"We weren't breaking new ground," Sievers said. "But let's face it, people get excited about this issue. All you have to do is put 'sex' in the title."

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— **Vincent J. Johnson**
Colorado Springs

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